

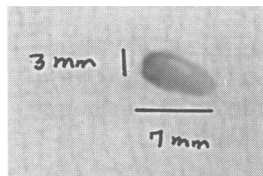
- cerebrospinal fluid during early stage of syphilis. *JAMA* 1924;83:1725-8.
- 18 Held JL, Grossman ME. Syphilis associated with human immunodeficiency virus infection. *J Am Acad Dermatol* 1989;20:295.
 - 19 Hay PE, Clarke JR, Taylor-Robinson D, Goldmeier D. Detection of treponemal DNA in the CSF of patients with syphilis and HIV infection using the polymerase chain reaction. *Genitourin Med* 1990;66:428-32.
 - 20 Kampmeier RH. *Essentials of Syphilology*. Philadelphia, JB Lippincott; 1943;148.
 - 21 Young H. Syphilis: new diagnostic directions. *Int J STD AIDS* 1992;3:391-413.
 - 22 Jurado RL, Campbell J, Martin PD. Prozone phenomenon in secondary syphilis. *Arch Intern Med* 1993;153:2496-8.
 - 23 Taniguchi S, Osato K, Hamada T. The prozone phenomenon in secondary syphilis. *Acta Derm Venereol (Stockh)* 1995;75:153-4.
 - 24 Lefevre JC, Bertrand MA, Bauriaud R. Evaluation of the Captia enzyme immunoassays for detection of immunoglobulins G and M to *Treponema pallidum* in syphilis. *J Clin Microbiol* 1990;28:1704-7.
 - 25 Ijsselmuiden OE, van der Sluis JJ, Mulder A, Stolz E, Bolton KP, van Eijk RV. An IgM capture enzyme linked immunosorbent assay to detect IgM antibodies to treponemes in patients with syphilis. *Genitourin Med* 1989; 65:79-83.
 - 26 Schmidt BL, Luger A, Duschet P, Seifert W, Gschnait F. Specific IgM tests in the diagnosis of syphilis. *Hautarzt* 1994;45:685-9 (German, English abstract).
 - 27 Baker-Zander SA, Hook EW, Bonin P, Handsfield HH, Lukehart SA. Antigens of *Treponema pallidum* recognised by IgG and IgM antibodies during syphilis in humans. *J Infect Dis* 1985;151:264-72.
 - 28 Gordon SM, Eaton ME, George R, Larsen S, Lukehart SA, Kuypers J, Marra CM. The response of symptomatic neurosyphilis to high-dose intravenous penicillin G in patients with human immunodeficiency virus infection. *N Engl J Med* 1994;331:1469-73.
 - 29 Gourevitch MN, Selwyn PA, Davenport K, Buono D, Schoenbaum EE, Klein RS, Friedland GH. Effects of HIV infection on the serologic manifestations and response to treatment of syphilis in intravenous drug users. *Ann Intern Med* 1993;118:350-5.

Cobblestones The seed of an ulcer

S C Tayal, K N Sankar

Department of Genito-
Urinary Medicine,
Newcastle General
Hospital, Westgate
Road, Newcastle upon
Tyne NE4 6BE
C Tayal
K N Sankar

Correspondence to:
Dr Sarup C Tayal.



Necrotic vegetable seed
measuring 7 × 3 mm.

A 34 year old Caucasian heterosexual male, a civil servant, presented to the clinic with a penile ulcer, which he noticed on the day of attendance. Neither he nor his regular partner had had any oral or genital ulceration before. He had not applied any topical treatment to the penis nor inserted a foreign body. Examination revealed a preputial ulcer with an underlying hard nodule measuring 7 × 3 × 1 mm which was squeezed out easily (fig). Microscopy showed that it was necrotic vegetable material, possibly a seed.

Implantation of foreign bodies under the skin of the penis to enhance coital excitement and orgasm of the sexual partner during intercourse has been reported. This practice appears to be quite common in Thailand; where it is performed by unqualified people in prisons and among lower socio-economic groups. The procedure entails piercing the

penile skin with a sharp instrument without local anaesthetic, and inserting one or more beads in to the superficial fascia. Most beads are derived from the bottoms of pomade glass jars, but other objects such as stones, bullets, grains of rice, pearls, and jewels may also be used.¹ The resulting artificial penile nodules are diagnosable by the stony hardness of the implanted beads. Foreign body implantation can be complicated by incarceration, granulomatous reaction, abscess formation, fistula or ulcer as in our case.

Unlike the previously reported cases of foreign body implantation our patient seems to have acquired the seed unwittingly, possibly through oro-genital contact.

¹ Lim KB, Seow CS, Tulip T, Daniel M, Vijaysingham SM. Artificial penile nodules: case reports. *Genitourin Med* 1986;62:123-5.